

**Current Volunteers****Castolon**

Terry Brackeen—Camphost (2nd)  
 Phil & Margaret Hodgens—Camphost (4th)  
 Paul & Judy Tarr—Visitor Center (1st)  
 Lee Tarvin—Visitor Center (1st)  
 Steve & Tina Ehrman—Backcountry (7th)

**Chisos Basin**

Ed Davis—Camphost (8th)  
 Jim & Mary Lynn Murrell—Camphosts (3rd)  
 Phil & Peggy Spruell—Visitor Center (1st)  
 Ann Wildermuth—Visitor Center (1st)

**Panther Junction**

Elaine & John Jonker—River Rangers (6th)  
 Tim Iverson (SCA)  
 Nick Mosesso— (SCA)  
 Genna Mason—SCA (ScRM)  
 Walt Lemonovich —Maintenance (2nd)  
 Bud Frankenberger—ScRM (10th)  
 Madelyn Morey—ScRM (2nd)  
 Ron & Jane Payne—ScRM (5th)  
 Mary Ann Harrison—ScRM (1st)  
 Mike Lovell— ScRM (1st)  
 John & Delona Roth— ScRM (1st)

**Persimmon Gap**

Mark Kirtley—Visitor Center (17th)  
 Jim & Marlene Hufford—Visitor Center (3rd)

**Rio Grande Village**

Mike & Nancy Coe—Backcountry (4th)  
 Steve Blythe—Backcountry (1st)  
 Jane Shepard—Camphost (1st)  
 Amy Gibson—Camphost (1st)  
 Daisy Welch—Backcountry (2nd)  
 Earl & Joy McFarland—Visitor Center (1st)

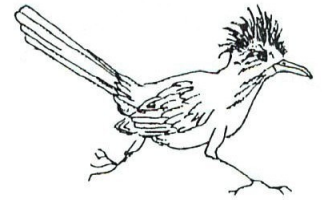
**Resident and remote volunteers**

Reine Wonite— Park Videographer (11th)  
 Stacy Sirotnak—ScRM  
 Jim Bishop—BBNHA  
 Sara Hall—ScRM

\* Number in ( ) indicates years of service

## Celebrating 50 Consecutive Years of Visiting Big Bend National Park

By Bud Frankenberger



In spite of the passage of fifty years, I remain stubbornly transfixed by the absolute wonder that I felt as a college freshman on my first night in Big Bend, my face pressed against the car window, watching the silhouette that mountain ridges in Green Gulch cast against a moon lit sky. When I rolled out of a sleeping bag the next morning in the Basin campground, I had no clear appreciation that my life had changed forever, that I would never lose the sense of wonder imparted from pinnacles colored by lichen at dawn, from the wrinkled collapse of desert landscapes at dusk, or the pink etchings of the Sierra del Carmen each evening.

*Bud and his son Rob prepared food for hikers on Juniper Canyon trail at Thanksgiving as part of his 50 year celebration.*



So in many ways, mine is a story of never completely growing up, of apparently having my maturity arrested very early in life. But since I've often maintained that the best alternative to eternal life, at least for a heathen like me, is everlasting immaturity, perhaps it is fitting that I should take a rather backward glance at how Big Bend has influenced my life over the last five decades by providing me with friends and family, with insights and renewal, and with purpose and direction. Big Bend is not mine; I am its, as you probably are as well. There's magic in this place. And it holds us long.

*(continued on page 2)*

## *Celebrating 50 Consecutive Years of Visiting Big Bend—continued*

My very first hike was a near disaster. Two upper classmen assured me that they knew the route up Campground Draw, across Pulliam ridge, and down Maple Canyon. What did I know? I was a freshman. Anyone older seemed smarter too. But they weren't. My very first hike should have been up the Lost Mine trail, or even to the South Rim, but instead, we lacerated ourselves upon prickly pear, lechugilla, and cat claw on our way up the north side of the Basin. Once at the top, we tried a canyon to reach the desert below, came to a giant pour-off, returned up hill, tried another, returned again, and then another and another. The older students, who once seemed wiser, were becoming a caution against self-assurance. Finding one's way in life could be harder than it appears. When we finally stumbled our way back into camp in the dark, our adult sponsors were so happy to see us that they forgot to be angry.

That first Big Bend hike occurred on Thanksgiving Day of 1962, and for many years Thanksgiving remained a traditional reunion time with friends and family at Big Bend. One year, in fact, camping in the Basin at Thanksgiving actually expanded my family. Understand it was very cold that November. Our daughter decided to stay with her grandmother in the lodge to escape the freezing temperatures. That left my wife and me alone together in the tent. It was cold. Very cold! But we found a way to stay warm, and the result of that warmth was born the next August. Rob's middle name is even Emory, for obvious reasons. Years earlier, I had wanted to name my daughter "Dagger Flats" but my wife's good judgment prevailed, and I feel certain our daughter is a better person for being named "Tessa." Sometimes the Big Bend magic makes me think askew.

Usually, however, Big Bend has provided a clarity and purpose for me. For instance, several decades ago, I lost my enthusiasm for "conquering the mountain." Some magnificent transition occurred in my perspective as I spent the 1980's trying to find my way through the Sierra Quemadas, that remote section of tortured topography south of the Dodson Trail, which includes Smokey Creek, Dominguez Mt., Elephant tusk, Tortuga Mt. and the Fresno Drainage. Trails are little more than lines on a map. Springs are periodic and unreliable. It is easy to become lost. Many search and rescue missions have been launched for hikers in the Sierra Quemadas, and deaths from dehydration in the summer or from hypothermia in the winter have occurred there.

I was probably attracted to this remote section of the park in order to prove myself, to learn to survive in tough conditions, to conquer the mountains. But over the years, often hiking alone for many days, improving my map reading skills, and discovering where to look for reliable springs, my urge to conquer the environment was replaced by a desire to live in harmony with it. Perhaps in the fold and collapse of the mountain strata, perhaps in the winding circles of eagles and hawks, perhaps in the haunting shadows of canyon rims or the dry sands of a desert creek, perhaps in the tilted walls of a river canyon or the greening sprout near a desert spring, perhaps in the very excitement of my own body pressed against the earth was the whisper of creation—the faint murmur of timelessness.

Once, on the South Rim, I even had the opportunity to step out of time, and not by throwing myself over the edge of the rim. Rather I stepped over another edge, the one that separates us from other species. I had positioned myself beneath a pinion pine so that I could not be observed by anyone from behind, but I had an expansive view over the desert thousands of feet below. Suddenly, the silence of my hidden reverie was disturbed by the startled "chaw" of a passing raven that seemed surprised by my presence in the hidden spot. And then as if to confirm the sighting of a human where one apparently didn't belong, the bird turned in a wide circle to examine me.

I stood, marveling at the flight, wishing for wings myself, and then, perhaps to demonstrate how birds could be out of their usual place as well, the raven turned over, glided upside down along the rim in front of me, raised one leg up, and chortled his guttural laugh. It was an aerial ballet, performed for an observant audience. "Show off!" I exclaimed, and smiled at his acrobatics. In a moment such as this, time does not so much stand still, as it seems to expand, perhaps to the edges of eternity. I think I had been granted my glimpse of eternal life, and it came not in human form clothed in clerical dogma, but in the black wings and laughter of a fellow traveler upon a high precipice.

*(continued on page 3)*

(continued from page 2)

For many years, I have recognized “a sense of the holy” in the natural world. It is not uncommon for us to feel this “cathedral effect” when gazing upon the splendor of a mountain vista or a river canyon; there is something in the power of natural beauty that provokes reverence and delight from our innermost being. Big Bend waited for millions of years to include us. It will wait for millions yet. It speaks in a language of whispers, revealing most to those who listen closest. I hope you too have discovered its most precious voices.

For my own part, some 50 years have slipped by since I graduated from high school and came to Texas. At least two of my friends from that bygone era have actually amounted to something. One, a nephrologist, has saved or prolonged hundreds, perhaps thousands, of lives affected by kidney failure. Another, still a Harvard economics professor, is often quoted in the New York Times. I, on the other hand, well, I’ve hiked a lot. On almost any scale of accomplishment, returning to Big Bend NP every year for half a century is not much of an achievement. But we are what we are, some of us destined to aid those who are suffering, others to become profound thinkers about prominent issues of the day, and then someone like me to stomp around in the backcountry of a remote national park on the edge of no where—the desoblado, which I like to think of as “home.”

*Bud Frankenberger has been a volunteer at Big Bend for 10 years working with Science and Resource Management.*

### **Hiking Club set for Tuesday February 26!**

If you are new to Big Bend, the hiking club is a chance for volunteers (and anyone else who wants to come!) to get together for a reasonable hike, visit with one another and see something that you might not see on your own. These hikes are not Olympic events, but rather moderate exercise with time to “smell the flowers” along the way. We will be taking a radio with us.

The next volunteer hike will be on Tuesday, February 26th at 8:30 am. Everyone should meet at the Panther Junction Visitor Center front parking lot at 9 am. We will be hiking the Hot Springs Trail from Daniels Ranch to the Hot Springs. We may divide into two groups and park one vehicle at each end and exchange keys in the middle. We will regroup at the Daniels Ranch picnic area for lunch (the Visitor Center and Camphost workers could join us for lunch at least!). This trail is 3 miles with some elevation gain—beautiful views of the river! No shade.



**What a great turnout for the Muskog Springs Hike in January!**

It has been quite the season for personnel changes at Big Bend. Here are some of the new names you might run into this year at Big Bend and an update on where some of the missing personalities have gone!

New **Superintendent Cindy Ott-Jones**, a 32-year veteran of the National Park Service, comes to us from Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument in the Panhandle of Texas where she was superintendent.

We have a new **Chief of Administration (AO) Ken Bigley**; he was AO at Bandelier National Monument.

**Phil, Heidi and Odette Welch** have moved on to Grand Canyon National Park.

In Interp, **Donna Harlow (Blue)** who you often see at Maverick Entrance Station has a new permanent VUA position at Big Bend and will continue her work at Maverick Entrance Station.

**Jenny Goucher, Matt Yarbrough, Bob Hamilton and Gail Abend** have returned as Seasonal Interpretive Rangers.

Two new Interpretive employees, **Michael Gonzales** and **Jaclyn Workman** will be managing the Boquillas Crossing Point of Entry when it opens.

**Linda Richards** was promoted to Chief of Facilities Management.

**John Lowe** is currently at Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Oklahoma for a few months.

Former volunteers **Danny and Diana Edwards** are both now working and living at Panther Junction, Danny with Facilities Management and Diana as Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

**Blake Trester** is the new West Sub-District Ranger and is living in Castolon. **Tim McElwain** has relocated to Glen Canyon NRA. **Austin Pauls** is a new seasonal West District LE Ranger. His wife **Allie** will be working for BBNHA at Panther Junction.

The new East District Ranger is **Ben Welch** and he comes to us from the Yellowstone National Park. He and his wife **Nancy** just had a baby and will be out of the park for a while. Also new to the East District is **Mike Rodriguez**, most recently at Lake Meade NRA, **Jorge (George) Martinez**, most recently at Indiana Dunes National Park and **Jose (Pops) Galindo** (Fire -West District last season). There is also a new seasonal ranger in the East District, Matt Graden.

In the River District, Beau Bracken and Doug Hens are working as seasonal rangers and Billie Brauch has returned from her training and is permanently assisting in that area.

**Susan Singleton** has moved to the Admin Assistant position in Fire Management.

Tim LaFever's son, **Quentin** has landed a seasonal job with the Maintenance Division as did Robo's son, **Roberto Hernandez, Jr.**

**Christie** at the Post Office has retired and **Romney Gonzales** has taken over.



All,

I would like to extend an invitation once again for all employees and volunteers to tag along with me during one of my routine patrol flights of the park. Over the past year I have been able to accommodate the vast majority of the over-flight requests that I've received, and it is time once again to extend the offer to those that are interested. My ability to take passengers is of course mission, time, and space dependant, but much of my patrol flying is done solo, which is an awful waste of airplane seats. The company and extra set of eyes would be much welcomed, and in the end, having more than one person in the airplane benefits the park, the employees, and in turn the visitors.

Leave a message at the phone numbers listed below with your contact information and I will get in touch with you to pencil you in for a patrol flight as space becomes available.

If you would like the flight to happen during your normally scheduled work time, then make sure you have approval from your supervisor to be away from your normal duty station. Also remember only park employees and **current/active** volunteers are allowed aboard DOI aircraft. If you fly in the park airplane more than a couple times per year, then you are considered a "frequent" aviation user and you need to attend a B3 basic aviation safety training session. I look forward to hearing from you.

Scott H. Taylor  
U.S. Park Ranger/Pilot  
Work:(432)371-2398  
Cell: (218)206-3289



*Volunteer Bob Douat went up in December!*

### ***Don't panic as you drive past headquarters!***

The Interpretive Division, the Visitor and Resource Protection Division and the Administrative Division can be found in the three houses near the corner of Bobcat Loop. This is the first road that you come to in the Panther Junction housing area.

To find the Interpretive Division and the Volunteer Office, turn right on Bobcat Loop. We are in the little green house (Casa Verde) on the left.

The Administrative Division is in the first house on the right. Visitor and Resource Protection and the Superintendent's Office can be found in the second house on the right. Dispatch is camping in the Conference Room at Science and Resource Management.

Please be considerate of the reduced office space and attempt to hold long conversations outside where fewer employees will be impacted. Sound seems to ricochet through the office spaces with no noise absorbing diversions!



## Events in the Area

**Saturday, February, 2—Pioneer Reunion** sponsored by BBNHA, 1-5 PM at the San Vicente ISD auditorium. Reservations are recommended - \$13.50 per person for members, \$15.00 for non-members. Call 477-2236 for more information.

**Saturday, February 9, 2013 Annual Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course**— The class is from 8-5 and will meet initially at the Emergency Services Building in Study Butte. From there, we will go out to the Lajitas airport for the driving skills portion of the course. The course is free and you need not register ahead of time. Simply show up before 0800 on February 9, 2013. Volunteers would need this course should they desire to be a volunteer ambulance driver. This course should be good for service in other parks also, should you wish to be an emergency driver somewhere else.

**Friday, February 15—VIP (Volunteer) Community Potluck Brunch** at Dugout Wells Picnic Area, 10:00 am. Bring a some food (egg casserole, bread or muffins) to share, a plate, a coffee cup and eating utensils. Grits, bacon, coffee and juice will be provided.

**February 14-16 Chihuahuan Dirt Desert Fest**, Lajitas, Texas; Mountain bike event. Find out more at [www.desertsportstx.com/mountain-bike-event/](http://www.desertsportstx.com/mountain-bike-event/)

**February 22-24– 27th Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering**, Alpine Texas. For more information see [www.cowboy-poetry.org](http://www.cowboy-poetry.org)

**Tuesday, February 26 Hiking Club Hike (see page 3)**

**Thursday, February 28—Classical Music Concert** . Kerry O'Hare (violin), Jane Brown (viola), Judy Eron (oboe) will be performing a Beethoven Trio. Charlotte Teer-Egerton (cello) will be joining them for a Haydn Quartet. The fun begins at 7 pm in Terlingua at LaKiva (in the Cave Room). No admission charge although I would recommend arriving early if you want a seat.

**Picking up your mail and packages this year!!!** There is no "white table" in the PJ hall or "a pile of boxes in Dispatch" this Spring when you arrive. Fedex & UPS packages for volunteers can be found in a plastic bin in the Admin house mail room (first house on right on Bobcat Loop). All packages will need to be picked up promptly from the Post Office if they were sent via USPS. If you use General Delivery, you can authorize others from your housing area to pick up mail for you, but the new postmistress, Romney Gonzales needs a written list of approved mail "picker-uppers". A phone call will not suffice.

Post office hours: Window is open 8:00-11:30 am and 1:30-3 pm Monday-Friday

Admin house for picking up UPS packages: 8 am-5 pm Monday-Friday